The Murders on the Chesapeake Bay

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The Murders on the Chesapeake Bay

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Summary

A Hannibal retelling of Edgar Allan Poe's The Murders in the Rue Morgue. Will Graham was once a respected investigator for the Baltimore police, when he was dismissed for improper conduct. Now he is unemployed and wallows in depression. However, his friend, Dr. Hannibal Lecter comes to him with a mysterious case that has the city considering the superstitious and his analytic mind is awakened. Part of a larger series in which classic works of Gothic literature are recast with Hannibal characters.

Notes

Will Graham: C. Auguste Dupin
Hannibal Lecter: The Narrator
Brian Zeller: Prefect of Police G___
Jimmy Price: Inspector
Freddie Lounds: Madame L'Espanaye
Randall Tier: The sailor

Aside from Poe's short story, this is also heavily inspired by the 1986 adaptation starring George C. Scott.

Chapter 1

The name of a dear and deeply respected friend had been making the news as of late. Not for his brilliance or his astonishing contributions to law enforcement, but for his recent dishonor. “Famous detective Will Graham is disgraced, forced to resign from his position,” the papers read.

The unscrupulous reporter Freddie Lounds wrote of the apparent mental instability, eccentricity, and improper conduct that led to Graham’s ejection from the Baltimore Police Department. The latest article claimed “Former Detective Will Graham suffers nervous breakdown!” Her defamatory words struck against the nerves of the esteemed surgeon, Dr. Hannibal Lecter. It wasn’t enough to report on his unemployment when it occurred, but to hound him afterward and comment on his subsequent appearance and well-being was reprehensible. He bristled and tossed the paper onto the seat beside him in the carriage. Closing his eyes, he rested his chin on his silk cravat. He hadn’t seen Will for quite some time, but he knew the man to have a tendency for melancholy and withdrawal. He would have to see for himself how well he was coping.

Unfortunately, Miss Lounds had not exaggerated. Will greeted Dr. Lecter with a warm embrace and invited him in, but he held a distance in his eyes and his grin wavered across his pale face. His hair had grown shaggy, with curls falling into his eyes and brushing against the tops of his shoulders and he sported a very unkempt beard. His vest hung open and his collar was popped and empty of a tie.

Lecter walked past him into the house and had to give his eyes a moment to adjust to the darkness. The interior of his parlor had a musty smell and it was clear that he had let his housekeeper go. Dr. Lecter took the liberty of opening the curtains to illuminate the somber room and he could see flecks of dust suspended in the beams of light that broke through. He glanced at Will and the younger man screwed his expression and shook his head as if anticipating disdain. He said nothing, but merely gestured at a seat in front of a chess board. Lecter smirked and sat down. Will cleared away the previous game he had played against himself, and reset the pieces.

“Perhaps you are wondering what brings me to Baltimore again,” Dr. Lecter submitted, moving his first piece.

“You have taken a position at the medical examiner’s office, consulting with the police,” Will muttered.

Lecter raised an eyebrow.

“What brings you to that conclusion?”

“You did not alert me to your visit because you have taken up permanent residence. If you were only visiting for a short period, you would have made sure I was in so you would not miss me. You were stiff when you hugged me, which indicates that you feel like an

ambassador of the enemy; the enemy being the department that dismissed me. And what other use would the police have for a surgeon?"

Lecter cleared his throat.

"You have heard of my fall from grace," Will continued, "You most likely heard it first from the department itself, but have since read about it in the papers."

"Is that so?" Dr. Lecter nudged a pawn forward.

"When you came to my door you were not surprised by my appearance and you said nothing. You scanned the room when you entered. Your eyes fell on the untidy details. All of this you were expecting before you even arrived at my door. You sniffed the air. You opened the curtains. You took on a very protective, paternal countenance. I believe you must have read Miss Lounds' article about my nervous breakdown and have decided to come to comfort and fawn over me. "

Lecter scoffed and Will looked up from the board and wrinkled his brow. A slow smile crept over the doctor's face, and Will responded with an impish grin.

"I am as transparent in my relations as I am at the chess board," Dr. Lecter remarked.

Will shook his head and replied, "You know bloody well you are the only formidable opponent I've faced. Anyway, we may as well discuss the matter at hand."

"Chief Inspector Zeller believes you are unfit for duty."

"Brian Zeller is a damned fool," Will spat and then slouched forward and said, "That isn't true. He's a capable investigator with a mind for scientific inquiry. He is simply constrained by intellectual prejudice."

Lecter pondered his next move and said, "Even the most ingenious among us can lack the power of analysis. That power requires a certain imagination. It is a rare breed of mind that claims both ingenuity and analytic talent."

"Unfortunately, my talents don't include working well with others."

"Have you considered private investigation?" Lecter suggested.

Will cringed.

"I believe that business relies on a certain reputation."

"You have solved many seemingly impossible crimes," Lecter pointed out, "Surely your reputation is satisfactory."

"Not anymore," Will muttered. "Miss Lounds saw to that."

Hannibal Lecter passed his eyes over his young friend. Under his patchy whiskers he could still see his comely features and steel blue eyes with lashes that batted slowly as he studied

the chess board. It was true, he was feeling a bit paternal. It pained him to see someone of Will's intellectual caliber reduced to a slovenly state. Out of respect for the man's competence, he abstained from lecturing or fawning.

He only stated, "If there is anything I can do for you at this time, you need only ask."

"Dr. Lecter," the Deputy Inspector greeted him as he approached the edge of the bay. "We've not thoroughly examined the body, in anticipation of your arrival."

"Thank you, Inspector Price," Lecter responded. He immediately approached the corpse of a vagrant splayed out near the water. His throat was mauled and his gut torn open. The mud around him was spattered with blood and gore.

"It appears to be an animal attack," Price pointed out, "What animal we can't be certain. The bite pattern is unusual."

"The ground is wet and soft," Chief Inspector Zeller stated, approaching the scene. "How can there be no animal tracks?"

He rolled up his sleeves and pinned them at the elbows. Then he reached out to shake Dr. Lecter's hand.

"Good morning Doctor."

"Only shoe marks in the mud," Price added. "The victim's shoe prints, and bare human feet. This area gets a bit of traffic from swimmers."

Lecter removed his frockcoat, handed it to a nearby officer, and pinned up his own sleeves. He crouched down next to the body and removed a small pair of forceps from his medical bag.

"Gashes and tearing," Dr. Lecter announced, pushing the flesh aside with his forceps, "No rooting or gnawing. Very unusual bite pattern, that is true."

"Any idea what sort of creature would do this?"

"Something quite large," Lecter responded. "The initial attack was directed at the throat and bruising over the shoulders suggests he was pinned down with great force."

The doctor glanced over at a cypress that was bare of branches at the trunk. A sturdy limb jutted out nearly a story up. He pointed it out to Zeller.

"Launched from the tree," Zeller said.

"Quite a climb," Price remarked. "A big cat, perhaps?"

“I will examine him further at the morgue,” Lecter said, wiping his forceps with a handkerchief.

The body was placed on a stretcher and loaded into an ambulance carriage. Dr. Lecter looked again at the bruise pattern on the shoulders and arms. Then his eyes darted back in forth in thought over the body, the blood, and the mud caking in the morning sun. They fell upon something stuck amidst the pondweeds. He picked it up and examined a shiny black ribbon with a distinct sailor’s knot tied in it. A strand of hair clung to the knot and the ribbon was slicked with pomade. Lecter glanced at the inspectors who were still peering up into the tree. He slipped the ribbon into his pocket and strode away.

The carriage lumbered over rougher streets as it approached the shipyard. Lecter thumped on the wall, signaling the driver to come to a halt. The cabin dipped as he stepped out, removed his round hat, and tucked it under his arm. The smell of soggy wood and machinery filled his nostrils. He wandered over to the men at work and watched them load the docks.

A young man with long fair hair tied up in an oiled ponytail shimmied up the stack with marvelous ease and clung to it as he tinkered with the lowering mechanism. A small, curious smile crept over Lecter’s lips.

Chapter 2

Hannibal Lecter scrutinized his companion in the cabin of the carriage. Will's hair hung in heavy curls about his face and his beard crept down his neck. He wore a loosely-tied Osbaldiston knot at his throat and an unbuttoned morning coat. It was like pulling teeth to just convince him to leave the house.

"Animal attack," Will mused.

"An initial theory," Lecter replied.

"You obviously don't have faith in that theory," Will said.

"There has been some evidence to the contrary."

"Surely Zeller and Price have it in hand." Will stared out the window of the carriage at the shops and flower carts along the street.

"It would do you some good," Lecter told him, "To put your mind on some task."

Will cringed at the doctor.

"I despise busy work. If I'm not needed, I'd just as soon stay in my gloomy hovel."

Lecter chuckled.

"Perhaps I found it too interesting to leave with the police."

"That's the spirit," Will whispered.

The carriage stopped in front of the hospital and they climbed out and began up the steps.

"Chief Medical Examiner Hannibal Lecter," a light, feminine voice called out. The two men turned to see a petite young woman with curly red hair advancing upon them. Will stiffened.

"With former Inspector Will Graham," she purred, "Looking the part of the eccentric recluse. What an odd pair. May I ask what brings you two together this afternoon?"

"Freddie Lounds," Will muttered to Dr. Lecter. Recognition passed over his face and he turned back to the woman.

"Miss Lounds," Lecter greeted, "May I ask you to show some courtesy, if you are capable."

"My apologies, Dr. Lecter," she replied. "As a journalist I often speak aloud the thoughts flitting through my brain. For example, it has come to my attention that you are consulting on a very unusual case of animal attack on the bay. I see you heading toward the hospital in the company of a terminated police officer and it causes me to speculate wildly."

“Speculation should be tempered with a certain amount of restraint, Miss Lounds,” Will said.

“Journalism profits from a lack of restraint, Mister Graham,” she told him, drawing out the word “mister” to call attention to the title that was now lacking.

“You can’t be profiting too greatly off of that enterprise,” Will remarked, casting a glance over her with a raised eyebrow.

“And why do you say that?” Freddie asked.

“Your dress,” Will pointed out. “I noticed stitching that is slightly different in two… three separate places.”

He gestured at the seams of her clothing and she instinctively brought her arms over the spots.

“They were not made by the original tailor and I don’t believe they were imitated by a talented seamstress. Patching it up yourself?”

Freddie chuckled through her nose with a sniff.

“Your perfume is very fine indeed,” Will added. “Although, with a touch more permanganic acid than a professional perfumer would use. I suppose you must be near the end of the bottle, and diluting it to prolong its life.”

Dr. Lecter smirked.

Freddie tossed her head, and a ruby curl escaped from her hairpin.

“Accompanied to the hospital by a doctor,” she said. “Are you finally checking into the psychiatric ward?”

Will glared at her and stepped closer. Lecter reached his arm out in front of him and nodded at Freddie.

“I’m afraid we really must be going about our business. Miss Lounds, please excuse us.”

In the morgue, Lecter pulled the shelf which contained the vagrant’s body out of the wall.

“Here you see,” he gestured at the shoulders, “Bruises indicate long phalanges, rather than paws. No claw marks. And down here, at the thighs,” he pulled back the sheet and pointed.

“Knees,” Will said with a nod. “This isn’t an animal attack, it’s a murder.”

“However,” Lecter went on, “The bite marks were not made by human teeth.”

“The wounds were not inflicted post-mortem,” Will murmured, inspecting the gashes, “They were, in fact, the cause of death.”

“Perhaps someone held the man down while a trained animal attacked?”

Will shrugged.

“Tell Zeller that he’s looking for a murder suspect. He can take it from there.”

Lecter’s face fell.

“You’re not going to see this through?”

“It’s more interesting than your garden-variety mugging, I’ll give you that,” Will replied. “But it’s nothing the average investigator can’t put together.”

Will descended the steps from the hospital, pulling on his morning coat. Dr. Lecter followed after him.

“Well that is terribly disappointing,” he said, catching up to the young man.

“I know you want to save me from my state of depression, Dr. Lecter,” Will said with a cheeky wrinkling of his brow. “It can’t be helped. The force released me and I’m through.”

“Just give in?” Lecter argued. “Go back to your messy apartment and feel sorry for yourself? When you could be contributing so much?”

“Murder is thoroughly banal, I’m afraid.” Will responded. “It does not need me to shed light upon it.”

Lecter pushed his hand into his frockcoat pocket and felt the silk ribbon between his fingers.

Days later, Dr. Lecter lifted the knocker at Will’s door and let it fall, waiting for an answer. Then he slammed the brass against the plate. Finally, he thumped on the door with the round side of his fist. He didn’t hear a sound from within. The door was unlocked, so he let himself in. Crumpled paper, articles of clothing, and plates of half-eaten food were strewn about the sitting room. Will Graham lay face down on the couch, his arm hanging off the edge with his hand dropped into a soup bowl.

“Will!” Lecter announced, and the young man stirred for a moment with a low mutter. He walked up to him and shook him by the shoulders.

Will groaned and sat up. He pulled his hand out of the bowl and wiped it on his disheveled linen shirt. He rubbed his face and asked, “Could you not have knocked?”

“I did,” Lecter huffed, “Several times. What a state you are in, Will.”

“My condition is my own business,” he replied.

“I’m through with gentility,” Lecter said, helping the man to his feet. “You are far too brilliant to squander your…”

Will stumbled backward, holding his head.

“You do not need to pay me a visit,” he growled, “If I upset you so.”

Lecter flinched.

“I have a job for you. I need your opinion.”

Will ignored him.

“There has been another murder,” Lecter continued.

“I don’t… I don’t care…” Will mumbled.

“Nonsense. And you smell dreadful,” Lecter said. “When was the last time you bathed, or shaved, for that matter?”

The doctor left the room in long, brisk strides, removing his coat and rolling up his sleeves. He entered the bathroom and started up the boiler for the wooden shower-bath and turned on the pump. When he returned, Will had sat down on the couch again, face in his hands and elbows on his knees.

“Come,” Lecter ordered, scooping his hands under Will’s arms and lifting him up.

“Oh, just leave me to my misery,” Will moaned with a dry half-smirk.

The doctor remained unamused. He dragged the young man into the bathroom and began to undress him. He pulled off his pants, helping him step out of them.

“I’m perfectly capable…” Will slurred, pushing him away.

“Are you?” Lecter retorted, his narrow eyes shining. Will met his gaze in a moment of stunned indignation.

“Dr. Lecter,” he enunciated, “I appreciate your concern, but please leave me be.”

Lecter stepped away and watched as Will limped from the bathroom and headed back to the couch.

“Enough,” he snarled, and bolted after him. He grabbed the young man by his arm and the back of his neck and dragged him back into the bathroom.

“Doctor…” Will called, trying to pull away without success. “Hannibal!” he cried out when Lecter shoved him, remaining clothes and all, into the wooden shower.

Dr. Lecter pulled the chain and emptied the still-bracing water onto him. Will’s mouth hung open and he trembled as it flowed over his face and body.

“Cease your self-pity!” Lecter barked. He peeled away Will’s linen shirt and pulled down his drawers. He grabbed a cloth and began to wash the man’s body with force enough to bring

pink to his skin.

“I can wash myself,” Will shivered.

“Then you would have already,” Lecter retorted. He pulled the chain again and held him under the flowing water. Will gasped and shook his head, dark curls flinging and wet.

“Do not treat me like a child!” Will sputtered, thrashing against him. He freed himself from Lecter’s grasp and backed into the wall of the shower. He stared at the doctor and breathed heavily, noticing the strange way his eyes were gleaming just now. He put his hands up, his own eyes widening as Lecter reached for his neck again.

He pulled the naked man out, wet and shaking and grappling with Dr. Lecter’s arm.

“What are you doing?” Will asked. Lecter sat on a chair and pulled Will down so that he was draped across his lap. He pinned his legs down between his own and pulled the young man’s arm behind his back.

“You say I’m being paternal?” Lecter responded. “Well let’s embrace that.”

Will squirmed and then cried out when Dr. Lecter smacked him on the backside with a broad, firm hand. He brought it back and spanked him, again and again.

“Let me go!” Will croaked, trying in vain to wriggle off of the doctor’s lap.

“I will not have you,” Lecter declared between hard blows, “Sitting around in filth and self-debasement, mourning your lot when you could be accomplishing something.”

Will lurched forward with the stinging slaps. A deep, tingling heat spread over his face and collar as his bottom grew sore. He felt his cock stir against Dr. Lecter’s leg and it filled with him with panic.

“Please, let me go,” he whimpered.

Lecter didn’t seem to hear him, but continued to spank harder, bringing satisfying rosy marks to Will’s pale skin.

“You need to wake up!” he bellowed, “Clear your mind, and maintain… a little… dignity!”

With each last word, Lecter swatted him with his shockingly strong hand.

Will dropped his head down toward the floor and ceased struggling. He let his body relax and take the paddling, contemplating on the irony of the word “dignity” in this situation. There was no hiding it now. His erection was pressing into Lecter’s thigh and he could do nothing but remain as still as possible, wet and flustered and humiliated.

When Lecter finally stopped, Will’s backside was outright burning. The sensation was strangely invigorating, as was the cold shower. The doctor released his grip on him but he didn’t dare move. He felt a softer touch run over his bottom and he shivered.

Dr. Lecter's voice was low and murmuring when he said, "We're going to dry you off, give you a shave, and then you are going to pull yourself together and… grow up."

Will sniffed and nodded. He felt Lecter's hand reach down and run his fingers through his wet hair, brushing it back from his face. He looked over his shoulder and saw his self-satisfied grin. A shuddering sigh escaped him and he started to slide off of his lap, crouching to hide the swelling of his cock.

Dr. Lecter stood up and pulled a towel out of the cupboard. He lifted Will to a standing position and began to dry him, ruffling his hair with the towel. Will's blue eyes rolled upward in a meek gaze. Lecter smiled and pulled the young man against him, kissing the top of his head.

He didn't comment on Will's physical reaction to the spanking when he dried off the rest of him. He placed the towel on the chair and sat him down, still not allowing him to dress. Large eyes followed him as he lathered up some foam and applied it to his whiskered jaw and neck.

When Lecter had cleared away the messy beard, he admired the sweet face that hid underneath. He lifted the young man's chin and brushed the back of his knuckles against his smooth cheek. Will's tongue flicked out for a moment and he bit his lower lip and closed his eyes as he leaned into the touch.

"That's better," Lecter whispered.

Will was keenly aware of his nakedness before the fully-clothed doctor. His eyes fell downward to the front of Lecter's trousers.

"Come on," he urged, pulling Will up from the chair. Instinctively, Will leaned into him, laying his head on the man's chest and nuzzling him. Lecter pushed one hand through Will's curls and let his other hand drop to rest on his pink bottom. He massaged the sensitive skin and Will emitted a lovely, shuddering whimper as he pressed his cock into Lecter's thigh.

Dr. Lecter produced a pleasured sound, but eventually forced himself to pull back and say, "Get dressed Will."

Will sighed, an expression of longing on his face.

"You will find this one more interesting, I promise you."

Will's eyelids were still heavy, his body still leaning toward the doctor.

"Why is that?" he asked.

"Locked room," Lecter said, bemused smile playing at the corners of his mouth, "No apparent entrance or exit, many people nearby but no witnesses… the suspect disappeared into thin air. The police are completely baffled."

A gleam flickered in Will's eyes and he exchanged an intense look with Dr. Lecter.

"And Will," Lecter added, "The victim is Freddie Lounds."

Chapter 3

Jimmy Price had spoken with the witnesses on the scene, including a police officer who was terribly shaken by the whole ordeal.

In the wee hours of the morning, people in and around Freddie's apartment building heard a horrible scream. They slowly ventured up the stairs to her door. Another sound was heard, that of an animal screeching and growling. By the time they kicked down the door to her apartment, only Freddie remained in the room, her body torn into by ferocious bites. The stairs the people climbed were the only entrance and all of the windows were nailed shut. In any case, the apartment was on the third story with nothing but a downspout nearby.

Inspector Price thumped his pen against the notepad. Three separate people made a guess at what they thought the screeching sounded like. Some thought it sounded like a foreign language they had never heard, others claimed it was like a wildcat.

One thing was certain, whatever it was had simply vanished without a trace and the people of Baltimore were terrified. Whispers of a strange, supernatural creature that manifested from nothing and into nothing, stalking victims indiscriminately, were travelling from ear to ear. The papers that morning had collected eyewitness accounts claiming that a half-human, half-animal was seen loping through the countryside.

Notes and newspaper clippings were scattered about Freddie's sitting room. Some had landed in the fireplace and were smoldering. A poker lay on the floor near where her body was found. Something caught Price's eye. He crouched down and studied the ivory shards on the rug.

It was pieces of broken teeth. He pulled out an envelope and pushed the fragments inside.

An officer walked in, face flustered.

"Inspector Price, Dr. Lecter has returned."

"Good," Price replied, standing to his feet. "I have something to show him."

"He brought Will Graham with him," the officer added. He stepped to the side and the two men entered the room.

"Graham," Price said in surprise, "Have you been reinstated?"

"He is here in a private capacity," Lecter answered.

Price looked unsure.

"For my benefit, Inspector Price."

Will meandered into the sitting room, glancing around with a far-off look in his eyes.

“Don’t worry, Price,” he muttered. “I won’t destroy anything.”

“Of course not,” Price assured him. His expression softened. “I want you to know I’ve always had respect for you, Mr. Graham.”

Will nodded, staring past the man.

Lecter watched as he moved around the room. Will was paying extra attention to the fireplace and the scraps of paper that were tossed inside. He squatted down and pulled a piece out. From what was left, he could tell that it was an article by Lounds. He looked over his shoulder to see the poker that had fallen on the floor.

“Miss Lounds must have used that to defend herself,” Price pointed out. “I found large shards of broken teeth on the carpet. I imagine she gave the beast quite a blow to the snout.”

“Blood?” Will asked, observing the poker and the carpet.

“Only in the area where Freddie’s body was found,” Price answered.

“What matter of beast doesn’t bleed when its teeth have been broken and knocked out?” Will mumbled to Lecter.

Price nodded and said, “You can see why some people are becoming a bit superstitious.”

“Superstitious?” Lecter asked.

“Nonsense, of course,” Price insisted, “But the mysterious details of these attacks, coupled with sightings of a strange beast, have people talking about… supernatural phenomenon.”

“The stairs to this apartment were blocked by witnesses during the attack,” Lecter told Will. “And the windows have been nailed shut.”

Will walked over to the windows and observed the nails. On one of them, the holes around the nails were a bit gapped and the nails themselves were quite rusty. Will lifted up on the pane, and sure enough, the window opened. The nails had thinned from rust to the point where they slipped in and out of their holes.

“Well, that is now thoroughly debunked,” Price sighed.

Will leaned out the window and noticed the downspout that led up the exterior wall.

“He shimmied up and down the drain pipe,” Will said.

“That’s quite a climb,” Price said. “What could accomplish such a feat?”

“A creature not indigenous to this region,” Brian Zeller called as he entered the room.

Price jumped, and then shifted when he saw the chief.

“Mr. Graham is accompanying Dr. Lecter today, as a consultant,” he explained.

“I do wish you would have considered asking me, Dr. Lecter,” Zeller said.

Will’s eyes flashed and he shut the window in silence.

“I found pieces of broken animal teeth on the carpet, near where Miss Lounds must have struck her attacker with the iron poker.”

Price showed him the envelope.

“These are from round, side-facing canines,” Zeller announced. “They must be examined by a zoological expert, but I believe they will confirm my hypothesis.”

“And what is that?” Lecter asked.

“That the attacker was a primate.”

“Fantastic,” Will said, pulling at his frock coat and moving toward the group. “We actually agree on that. The killer *was* a primate.”

Zeller nodded and added, “Most likely an orangutan.”

Will stopped short and blinked.

“My apologies, Chief Inspector Zeller. I wrongly attributed you as being boxed in by assumptions and prejudice. I didn’t recognize your ability to consider the completely absurd.”

Zeller scoffed, then his eyes grew fierce.

“Dr. Lecter, please escort Mr. Graham from this *closed* crime scene. If he trespasses here again I will be forced to have him arrested.”

Chapter 4

Will hunched over his morning paper in his trousers and white undershirt. He had only dressed halfway that morning before he was distracted by the headline:

Other-worldy creature terrorizes Chesapeake Bay!

Even without Freddie Lounds, journalism continued to aim for the sensational and half-true. Will laughed to himself and took a sip of his coffee. He heard the sound of the knocker on his door and went to answer it. Hannibal Lecter greeted him.

“A zoologist examined the teeth shards found at the scene,” he said. “It is confirmed to be orangutan. I’ve never seen Chief Inspector Zeller so smug.”

Will invited him in.

“Does he realize that orangutans have feet that leave prints in the mud and blood that flows when they are wounded?” he asked.

“You are not dressed,” Lecter noticed.

“Ah, my friend,” Will retorted with a winning smile, “This is not the disheveled state of melancholy, this is the disheveled state of inspiration!”

Dr. Lecter looked pleased and replied, “I’m glad to hear of it.”

“I had my beliefs thoroughly confirmed when I saw the state of Miss Lounds’ apartment,” Will continued. “I could see the killer in my mind’s eye. He cast her life’s work around with intent, placing some of it very purposefully into the fireplace to be burned. Beasts are not concerned with disrespecting their victims after killing them.”

“You were able to reconstruct the mind-set of this killer?”

“Yes. What I felt was certainly the psychology of a human being. His destruction of her home and property were not the frantic clawing of an animal but the willful disdain of a man.”

“A man with abnormal agility, in order to escape from the window using nothing but a downspout,” Lecter pointed out.

Will lifted his coffee cup and took a sip. He made an offering gesture, and the doctor declined.

“Yes, I would say we are looking for someone who is experienced with climbing. An acrobat, or perhaps a sailor.”

Lecter’s eyes crinkled approvingly.

“How do you explain the teeth, and the bite wounds?”

Will straightened and set his jaw.

“Bear with me on this,” he said.

“Of course.”

“I believe this killer has constructed some sort of apparatus… for his face and head, in which teeth are attached. I believe he wishes to be an animal, and so he has done his best to make it so.”

“Ingenious,” Lecter said, “Positively ingenious.”

“Machinery does not bleed, Doctor.”

“How will you catch this killer?” Lecter asked.

“I won’t,” Will replied with a shrug. “Chief Inspector Zeller would not change his viewpoint for me, even if I attempted to persuade him.”

“Surely you can try,” Lecter said, disappointed.

Will flopped down on the couch and put his feet up on the coffee table. He grinned when he saw the vexed expression on Dr. Lecter’s face.

“I insist that you put forth more of an effort,” Lecter told him. “For a moment there I believed you were your old self again.”

“You insist?” Will shot him an impish look. “I suppose you are going to play daddy with me again?”

“No,” Lecter sighed. He turned and headed for the door. “You will do what you will do.”

Will jumped up and followed after him.

“Wait,” he said.

Lecter turned back and cocked his head. Will’s eyes were large and imploring when he touched the doctor’s arm.

“Please,” Will coaxed. “I need you to.”

Dr. Lecter narrowed his eyes and studied Will’s face. He reached out and brushed his knuckles against his cheek, and buried his fingers into his hair. Will leaned into his touch and closed his eyes.

“You need me to what?” Lecter whispered.

Will looked exasperated, and then shy.

“Show me…” he suggested, “Some firmness… of hand.”

Lecter grinned and walked toward the couch. He pulled off his coat, draped it over the backrest, then pinned his sleeves up at the elbows. He sat down with his legs apart and nodded at Will.

Will grabbed his arm and shuffled for a moment.

“How would you like me?” he asked. Lecter gestured for him to come to him, and Will obeyed. The doctor unbuttoned Will’s trousers and pulled them and his drawers down. Will was already stiffening.

“Over my knee,” Lecter ordered. Will climbed onto the couch and draped himself over his lap.

Dr. Lecter gently lay his hand on Will’s bare ass and smiled when the young man twitched and sighed in anticipation. He pulled his arm back and gave him a firm spank. Will covered his face, trying to hide his blush and giddy smile.

“You think this is play?” Lecter asked him. “Perhaps last time I wasn’t firm enough, eh?”

Will groaned and then issued a soft yelp when Lecter began to smack his backside over and again. He bit his lower lip and looked forward, growling a bit as his bottom grew warmer and started to sting. He lowered his shoulders against the cushion of the couch and propped up his hips.

Lecter felt waves of arousal come over him when he saw Will responding to him like this. Raising his ass a bit, spreading his legs, emitting such lovely noises. He spanked him harder, listening to the sounds and trying to outdo himself in forcing them from this pretty boy’s open mouth. As his hand left deeper red marks on his round flesh, the growls became whimpers and he could hear Will’s breath become ragged and desperate. It was starting to really hurt now.

Eventually, Will was crying out with the slaps, lurching forward with each blow so that his cock was rubbing up against Lecter’s thigh. A dab of his precum stained his trousers where the boy was involuntarily humping.

“Please, that’s enough,” Will moaned, trying to pull away.

Lecter pinned him down and continued. He was thrilled by the red shade of Will’s bottom compared with the paleness of his lower back, hips, upper legs. The way he wriggled and pushed his ass out, the feel of his dripping cock against his thigh, and god… the sounds he made. The pleading. How his voice grew higher in pitch and softer, sweeter, boyish. A deep rumble came from his own throat as he paddled the young man into submission once more. Will dropped his face to the couch cushion in an attempt to muffle his cries. It was no use. He broke down and whined and carried on like an apologetic child.

“Hannibal…” he sniveled, his voice wracked with desperation. “Please…”

“That’s not what you called me,” Lecter replied. He spanked Will harder, enthralled by the way he brought himself up to his knees and then dropped again, twisting helplessly to escape

the blows.

“What?” Will cried.

“You said I wanted to play daddy. So that’s what you should call me.”

Will gasped and moaned, “Daddy, please.”

Lecter growled pleasurably and gave him a few hard spanks before he released his grip. Will sniffled and covered his blushing face once more.

“Thank you,” he whispered, voice still so enticingly submissive and delicate.

The burning sensation on his backside was too much. It filled his body with a strange itch, a yearning tug in his gut, and an unbearable strain on his genitals. He humped again, pressing his cock against Lecter’s leg. A broken whimper, an alluring wiggle of his hips, and suddenly Lecter couldn’t be still any longer. He lifted Will off of his lap and gripped him by the ear like he was an impudent schoolboy. He tugged on it, and led him, stumbling over his trousers to the bedroom.

“I’m sorry,” Will begged. “I’ll call you whatever you like. Anything you like.”

“I like daddy just fine,” Lecter murmured into his ear, and pushed him down on the bed. Will’s mouth fell open in pain as his bottom hit the mattress.

“A-all right,” he said. He stared back at the man with wet blue eyes, wide and affectionate as Lecter pulled off Will’s undershirt and removed his trousers and drawers from around his ankles. The doctor opened up his button fly and pulled out his cock. He grabbed Will by the hair at the back of his head and guided his trembling mouth to him. He pushed his cock between fleshy lips and moaned as the boy began to suck. Then he pulled out again, gazing down as Will inhaled sharply and darted his tongue.

“Again,” Lecter snarled, pulling back on Will’s curls so that his lovely throat was exposed.

“Daddy,” Will whispered, and was rewarded with a cock in his mouth once more.

Finally Lecter pulled away and maneuvered Will on the bed so that he was on his back, with his knees lifted up toward his chest. The young man quivered as Lecter licked his fingers and pushed them inside of him.

“Oh…” Will moaned, throwing his head back. “Please, yes, please.”

Dr. Lecter spread Will’s knees apart and pinned them down with both hands. He admired his own handiwork on Will’s pretty flesh as the boy guided his cock into him.

If Lecter enjoyed the sounds Will made when he spanked him, the noises he made while being fucked were intoxicating. He thrust into him, staring at his beautiful face. Will’s eyelashes fluttered, his brow knit, his mouth open as he grunted in pleasure and astonishment.

They were still in bed an hour later, completely spent and sharing a cigarette. Will glanced over at Lecter with a cheeky raised brow and took a drag. Lecter snickered and shook his head. He stole the cigarette and took a puff.

“I expect to see some results for my efforts,” He scolded.

“Mmm…” Will sighed and relaxed into the pillow. “I don’t know what you want me to do. Zeller and his team are looking to catch an animal. It’s not as though I can bait a trap and wait…”

Will paused and furrowed his brow.

“What are you thinking of?” Lecter asked.

Will jumped out of bed and began to pace the room. Lecter watched him amusedly as the young man walked back and forth, naked, his bottom still bright red. Will stopped and turned to him, gesturing with his hands.

“If this killer’s toy was broken, he will need to fix it.”

“One should think so,” Lecter agreed.

“I have an idea,” Will said, reaching for his clothes. “Unfortunately, we will need the help of the Chief Inspector, but maybe you can help me convince him.”

Lecter beamed at the young man.

“Why are you just sitting there, smiling?” Will asked impatiently.

“I’m just,” Lecter said, shaking his head. “I’m just so glad to see you are back.”

Chapter 5

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

"How can this possibly be a human killer?" Zeller asked. "The bite wounds are clearly animal, the teeth shards identified as orangutan, and the bestial mayhem at the scenes show a complete lack of human motive or cognizance."

"There were no animal tracks in the mud, only bare human feet," Will pointed out. "There was no blood spilled by the tremendous jaw wound that must have been inflicted, and I certainly argue with you on the lack of human cognizance."

"All circumstantial," Zeller insisted. He had a wide-eyed, stunned expression when he was frustrated.

Will shook his head and grimaced, "I must say, Chief Inspector, I admire your tenacious ability to deny that which is, and explain that which is not."

Zeller threw his head back and scoffed.

"With all due respect, Inspector Zeller," Lecter stepped in. "I have to agree that the evidence collaborates Graham's theory."

Zeller looked thoroughly baffled, but deferred to Dr. Lecter's word on the subject.

"Well then," he sighed. "How are we supposed to catch a killer who thinks like a man but behaves as an animal?"

"We set a trap," Will suggested. "I will bait it; I just need you to be there when the snare drops."

The next day, the advertisement section of the paper read:

FOR SALE—an orangutan skull of the Bornese species, large and in perfect condition with all of its teeth. Once in the possession of a sailor aboard a Maltese vessel. Please inquire at the following address.

Will Graham waited at the warehouse, the address of which was printed in the advertisement. He had wished that Hannibal Lecter would accompany him, but the man said he had other business to attend to.

When the man arrived, Will was surprised by how young he looked. He had a smooth face, long hair slicked back into a ponytail, and a lanky frame. His eyes were wide and glassy and he fidgeted with his fingers clasped around his sailor's hat.

He bowed awkwardly and bade Will, "Good evening."

“I suppose you have called about the orangutan skull. Upon my word, they are remarkably fine animals.”

“They are, sir,” the sailor replied. “Do you have it here? The advertisement mentioned it had all of its teeth. I would like to inspect them first if you don’t mind.”

“Of course,” Will answered. He could see a swelling bruise along the young man’s jawline. Even through his apparatus, Freddie Lounds had delivered a painful blow. How very like her.

“The advertisement didn’t mention how much you wanted for it.”

“Yes, it is odd,” Will mused, coming closer to him, “That you would answer an advertisement that didn’t have a price on it; almost as though you would be willing to pay whatever was asked for it. You must be an avid collector.”

The sailor shifted and darted his large eyes around the room. Will noticed that the hair on his arms was beginning to stand on end, an animalistic sense of danger.

“How much do you want?” he asked, taking inventory of all the possible exits.

“I want you to tell me about the murder of Freddie Lounds, and the transient on the Chesapeake Bay.”

The sailor's face flushed up as if he were struggling with suffocation. He started to back away with the countenance of death itself, and the next moment he turned and darted for the door.

Price and Zeller had come up the stairs and were waiting for him on the other side of it. The sailor released a strange cry, like a cornered beast, and ran toward the window instead.

“Grab him!” Zeller shouted, and made chase.

The windows had been sealed and the sailor smashed out the glass with his elbow then climbed through with preternatural agility, seemingly unaffected by the points of glass left in the pane. The suspect crouched with his feet at the edge of the sill and sprang out toward a nearby tree, his body stretched like a leaping cat. Zeller grasped him by the ankle and the young man dropped and slammed his body against the brick wall.

Zeller attempted to hold the man by his leg, but his grip was slipping and the glass of the windowpane was sticking into his chest as he leaned out. He let go, and the sailor fell two stories and cracked his head on the pavement below.

Hannibal Lecter thought it was a terrible pity, although ultimately beneficial to him, that the sailor had to die. The Baltimore police had identified him as Randall Tier, and found his apparatus in his apartment, complete with broken fangs.

Lecter remembered how he had first seen the infernal contraption. It was a marvel of engineering. He touched the helmet, ran his fingers over the brass mechanisms and the smooth ivory texture of the fangs. It thrilled him. After spying on the sailor several days ago,

he found his loft a few blocks from the shipyard. He picked the flimsy lock and entered. That's when he saw it lying on the table.

When he heard the sound of the door opening he turned to greet Randall Tier with a placid expression.

"Who are you?" the young man snapped. "What are you doing in here?"

"Just admiring your work," Lecter replied, putting his hands in the pockets of his frockcoat. He pulled out the black silk ribbon. "I believe this is yours."

The man snatched it out of his hands. His boyish face grew ashen.

"You can't just come into my home…" he snarled.

Dr. Lecter clicked his tongue and cast a loving gaze over the helmet.

"I have a business proposition for you," he said.

His labor of love had not gone to waste. Will Graham was once again clear of mind and energetic. Stacks of letters had piled up from potential clients, asking him to lend him their services as a private investigator.

"I want to thank you," Will told him, moving his chess piece across the board. "You refused to let me stew."

"My pleasure," Dr. Lecter replied.

A thoughtful expression came over Will's face as he gazed over the chess board.

"One thing troubles me about that case," he said.

Lecter cast him a curious glance.

"From how the initial murder was described to me, it would seem Mr. Tier was more intent on savagery than any kind of retaliation or contempt. Not to mention that the victim was a transient, a seemingly nameless individual who was out in the open and easy pickings. That is quite different from slipping into a woman's house and risking capture. It was much more… specific, the second time."

"Perhaps he was practicing on the transient," Lecter suggested, moving his piece forward.

"Perhaps," Will said, "Although this man had no seeable reason for animosity toward Miss Lounds. The way he tore up and destroyed her papers suggests otherwise."

Dr. Lecter nodded, his eyes gleaming at Will.

"They found $400 in his apartment," the young man went on. "It occurs to me that perhaps Tier really was a beast, and someone was holding his leash."

Will studied his friend’s face, gauging his reaction.

“You think I am venturing too far into conjecture, don’t you?” he asked.

Lecter thought for a moment and answered, “What songs the Sirens sang, or what name Achilles assumed when he hid himself among women, although puzzling questions are not beyond all conjecture."

Will sniffed and grinned.

“Perhaps I am incapable of simply closing a case.”

“Mr. Tier did you a favor,” Lecter said. “He eliminated that discourteous journalist, and helped you gain some lost notoriety.”

Will chuckled at the morbid suggestion, then a far-off look came to his eyes and his smile began to settle on his face.

“Check-mate in two moves,” Lecter murmured.

Will looked down at the board in surprise.

“So you have me.”

“Any which way you like,” Lecter remarked, and stood to his feet.

He walked over to Will and took him by the arm, lifting him from his chair. The doctor ran his fingers through Will’s curls and the young man seemed to purr as he leaned into his touch.

“If I didn’t know any better, Hannibal, I’d think you were trying to change the subject,” he whispered.

“Ssh…” Lecter soothed, and pressed his mouth against Will’s in a deep kiss.

Chapter End Notes

Thank you so much for reading! Stay tuned for the next story in the Hannibal Gothic Tales series: The Picture of Will Graham, based on Oscar Wilde's The Picture of Dorian Gray!

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